English 163

THE ITALIAN FILM

Michael Silverman

Assignment Number 1 -- Shoeshine and La Terra Trema

1. Both films attempt to make some commentary - broad and specific -- on problems existing in Italian society. But they do so primarily by concentrating on the fate of individuals. To what extent does this modify the aims of social inquiry? Do the films succeed in persuading us as social documents, or do they simply seem to be about some people with bad luck?

2. Read the article by Andre Bazin (in What is Cinema?) on LA TERRA TREMA -- his responses are mixed, he finds the film boring but extraordinary, awkward but sophisticated, paternalistic but sincerely communistic (small'c'). Do you agree, disagree? Try to expand some of Bazin's adjectives, and cite particular passages from the film.

3. The family -- its stability, values, disintegration -- will be an important theme in many of the films we'll be seeing in this course. What is the place of the family in these two films -- what are its limitations in LA TERRA TREMA, what replaces it in SHOESHINE?

4. Comment on Visconti's use of composition within the frame -- often he pays close attention to balancing visual details. Does this highly stylized formal impulse conflict with the 'realistic' intentions of the film?

5. What is the horse doing in SHOESHINE?

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Semester II, 1974-75
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Michael Silverman

Assignment #1b

Write on one, or any combination.

1. Both films deal with social problems (unemployment, housing) in light-hearted ways, and seem to shy away from the theatrical naturalism of LA TERRA TREMA or the circumstantial tragedy of SHOESHINE. Does their essential gaiety of tone (André Bazin rightly notes that in MIRACLE IN MILAN "the junkyard Judas who sells his companions' hovels to the vulgar Mobbi does not stir the least anger in the onlookers") mitigate the force of the social criticism? or does the s.c. mitigate the gaiety

2. In MIRACLE IN MILAN we have a mixture of miracles, fantasy, social satire and imaginative transformations like the conversion of spilled milk into a countryside filled with trees and people. Define these various elements as they exist in the film, and try to explain how they co-exist. What effect does this mixture have on the film as a whole?

3. The central figure in each film can only be described by so dangerous a word as "good"--whether absolutely benign (Totò in MIRACLE IN MILAN) or complaisant and generous (Antonio in TWO PENNYWORTH OF HOPE). How do the directors and scenarists manage to convince us of their characters' credibility, without reducing them to stereotypes?

4. Assess Bazin's discussion of the anti-theatrical impulses of neo-realism (pp. 64-67), using as the basis of your remarks the two films seen tonight. Do they fulfill his claims? Partially?

5. Discuss the last sequence of TWO PENNYWORTH OF HOPE (the removal of Antonio and Carmela from her father's house). Does it seem to be the climax of the film's pre-occupations? Is it an ideological moment?

gibberish in Modern Times

poetico-realist interlude p. 80

gaiety can be used as cover for censors
does s.c. mit. gaiety?

Keith 98.6

COCTEAU's once upon a time

I'M SURPRISED YOU DIDN'T EMPHASIZE THE ELEMENTS OF CIVIL (BALLOONS, CHORIC SONGS, ROLL-BUT-HAPPY-BECAUSE-OCCUPIED COMMUNITY) IN GREATER DETAIL.

Jeremy Butler
English 163
Mr. Silverman
February 17, 1975

Assignment #1b, question #1

As a general rule, gaiety (even an "essential gaiety of tone") does not preclude forceful social criticism, but it does elicit a much different response than a tale of social criticism spun with more tragic material. Whereas LA TERRA TREMA or DeSica's earlier LADRI DI BICICLETTE might actually move the spectator to effect social change, MIRACLE IN MILAN assumes that the viewer already possesses a healthy disdain of injustice and therefore needs no proselytism, but rather an uplifting example of persons who have come to cope with poverty and/or injustice. Which is to say in viewing LA TERRA TREMA the spectator himself suffers the oppression along with the characters of the movie. He leaves the theater feeling as though he has been drawn into their sorry condition for the past hour and a half or two hours. On the other hand, one is invigorated by MIRACLE IN MILAN. It's a movie that raises ones spirits instead of demanding rectification of dire situations. If one were to choose audiences for each of these films it would seem just to screen MIRACLE IN MILAN for the poverty-stricken, reserving LA TERRA TREMA for the complacent well-to-do in hopes of engendering compassion and the will to change matters.

Well-put (some irony here)

Social criticism in MIRACLE IN MILAN is slighted, but it is not so much its gaiety that undercuts any call to social reform, as the fantastic elements of the film. After all, DeSica opens it with what Jean Cocteau has called the "open sesame" to childhood, "Once upon a time..." Even though DeSica titles the film MIRACLE IN MILAN, we are actually orientated to no specific time or place -- as we most definately are in LA TERRA TREMA. The very settings echo the sense of ambiguity of time and space in the former and specificity

Good point! excerpt should have been longer and accessible to us; even as a grey city is far distance-wise, it is also somehow real as it is theatrical. De Sica's city could be universal -- but we see a real landmark at the end!

in the latter. The destitute condition of the inhabitants of post-war Milan is evoked through occasional shots of the city, but the primary location is the non-descript hoboes' jungle that Toto magically (spiritually?) transforms into an Atlantis of sheet-metal shacks. This unearthly, slightly surrealistic landscape removes the story from any particular earthly relevance and thereby creates a modern day Aesop's fable, ~~as it were~~. The film, as with all fables, illustrates a moral, but in this case it is too general and abstract to pass for forceful social criticism. Toto is just another good hearted poor boy blessed with a fairy godmother. In contrast, LA TERRA TREMA and LADRI DI BICICLETTE are filmed on the beaches of Aci Trezza and the streets of Rome, lending an aura of actuality (realism, if you will) to the already realistic story. We are forced to come to grips with an isolated instance of destitution, not to deal with some generalized tale along the lines of the fox and his unattainable sour grapes.

A second aspect promoting MIRACLE IN MALIN'S fantasy is the utilization of professional actors. Certainly professional actors do not necessarily increase the fantasy of a film (UMBERTO D utilizes professional actors, I believe), but in relation to many of the neo-realist films it does.

> [Neo-realism] calls upon the actor to <u>be</u> before expressing himself. This requirement does not necessarily imply doing away with the professional actor but it normally tends to substitute the man in the street, chosen uniquely for his general comportment, his ignorance of theatrical technique being less a positively required condition than a guarantee against the expressionism of traditional acting. (Bazin, p. 65)

In conjunction with the ambiguity of location, the implausible narrative and the various camera tricks (enabling people to fly on broomsticks, appear and disappear, etc.) Francesco Golisano's performance as Toto does not strike one as the behavior of a person of earthly deportment. He does not theatrically

over-act his part by exaggerating the stereotype of the cheery poor-boy, but he is certainly no "man on the street." Further, ~~All the same~~, we know that he is not "Toto" in real life. The fantasy is thus promoted by our knowledge of his own personal fantasy as an actor playing a role - a role he must necessarily be detached from. Relatively speaking, the inhabitants of Aci Trezza (in LA TERRA TREMA) are much closer to their roles than any actor, regardless of his dramatic skills, could ever be.

Since MIRACLE IN MILAN follows LADRI DI BICICLETTE in DeSica's oeuvre it is only logical that one ask if MIRACLE'S humor detracts from the social criticism DeSica began in LADRI DI BICICLETTE, but the more eternal question one might query is, "Does the social criticism vitiate the essential gaiety of tone?" The social criticism of Chaplain and Rene Clair's work seems today to be the weakest portion of their films. Though some critics may claim that the insertion of a shot of herded livestock within a sequence of workers off to their jobs (MODERN TIMES) may be as relevant today as it was 40 years ago, in point of fact it seems pallid in comparison to Chaplain's comic inventions. The burning issues of days gone by frequently appear to us as dying embers which we must fan with our imagination to even partially discern the import they had in their own epoch. Hopefully, Italian neo-realism, by virtue of its "pure" usage of the medium, will escape the deterioration of efficacy that time has worked on Chaplain's social criticism. Bazin places neo-realism upon the same level as what he describes as the "realist revolution" in the modern novel: a combination of "behaviorism, a reporter's technique, and the ethic of violence" (p. 40). Apparently all roads lead to neo-realism, but the question arises, "What do we do now that we've gotten there?" Today's filmmaking has apparently left neo-realism far behind. (It's entirely possible that we'll soon look upon post-war Italian film as a mawkish curiosity to be set on a dusty shelf next to German expressionism.) When, and if, that time

arrives, MIRACLE IN MILAN ought to come into its own as a very entertaining film. No longer will it have to be thought of as the "poetico-realist interlude" (Bazin, p. 80) between LADRI DI BICICLETTE and UMBERTO D, but instead as a comedy in its own right, following closely in the footsteps of Chaplin (compare the sequence where the industrialist barter in dog barks to the speech at the unveiling of the statue in CITY LIGHTS) and perhaps even surpassing him on occasion.

well-argued criticism- paper could use further development of some of the ideas.

English 163
The Italian Film
Assignment 2a

Write on one question only (a combination of two or more questions is possible, but unlikely, given the length allotted--3 to 4 pages).

1. Leprohon says that "nothing happens" in VOYAGE TO ITALY, and it's true that the film presents us with a few sightseeing trips, some driving and some arguing. Rossellini's defenders get very huffy on this point, saying that "the weight of these objections seems debatable, considering that nothing much is likely to happen to an English couple on holiday abroad. It does not need Alexander to become the lover of an exiled Russian countess on Capri, or Katherine to have an affair with the head of the Mafia in Naples . . ." (José Luis Guarner). Does anything happen in the film and, if so, where do we look for "it"? Do certain more obviously climactic scenes (the uncovering of the couple in the ruins of Pompeii, the "miracle" at the end,)bear all the narrative weight? Or are things going on elsewhere?

2. Rossellini uses Ingrid Bergman as the intellectual and emotional center of his film, and his camera describes her in a particular way. As best you can, describe this process as you find it in one or two sequences in the film which seem to you to be important. Do you find Rossellini's visual style (camera movement, placement of characters within the frame, camera angles, cutting, and the like) more mannered than De Sica's? Visconti's? Cite particular sequences (the visit to the Capodimonte museum is a good one for the purpose of stylistic analysis). Does the visual style of the film change, or vary (try timing the length of the shots at various points)? Does Bergman's face affect the film's visual style?

3. Rossellini himself has said that in VOYAGE he tried to set up "an encounter between two civilisations . . . the Nordic and Latin worlds." Obviously Italy is used as landscape and metaphor and, for the first time in post-war Italian film, as something seen essentially through foreign eyes (though of course it's also being seen through Rossellini's eyes at the same time). Comment on this use of the "idea of the Mediterranean." What are its constituent parts, and how do they relate to the central problem of the couple (described rather harshly by RR as "small people with no doctrine")?

4. Compare the small towns of LA TERRA TREMA, TWO PENNYWORTH OF HOPE and I VITELLONI (save most of your remarks for Fellini's film). To what purposes does Fellini subject the provincial atmosphere of this coastal town? (Those of you who have seen the recent AMARCORD might wish to compare the rather more gaudy and explicitly spectacularized town in that film with the drab nighttime streets of this earlier film).

5. Both films record the growth of consciousness in a central character (Katherine Joyce in VOYAGE, Moraldo in VITELLONI). Contrast the methods of recording this growth utilized by the two directors. Which strikes you as the more convincing dramatically.

6. The whole of I VITELLONI enacts a series of conflicting attitudes towards people, events, landscape--at times the film seems cynically detached, at others sentimentally indulgent towards foibles of behavior, then again nostalgic and retrospective. Do you find this mixture troublesome when trying to assess any particular part of the film, or is it bothersome when you try to think of the film as a whole? Does this mixture (not necessarily a confused mixture, of course) convey an attitude of embarrassment and fondness for insularity and provincialism (as opposed to Rossellini's superficially "international" production)?

7:00 L'ECLISSE CINE

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Semester II, 1974-75
Michael Silverman

Assignment 2b

Write on one question only.

1. Antonioni's two films (feel free to write either on THE ECLIPSE or CRONACA DI UN AMORE) have fewer episodes and a tighter plot construction than any films seen so far this semester. How does he achieve this restriction of exposition while, at the same time, permitting the visible world such languid freedom (some viewers would say too much freedom, bordering on virtual aimlessness)? What episodes are omitted from CRONACA DI UN AMORE and THE ECLIPSE which nevertheless seem present because they live in the behavior of the characters and the surfaces of their lives? How does this contradiction (or paradox) contribute to the shape of the two films?

2. In Antonioni's films we often follow a moody female character (Monica Vitti in THE ECLIPSE, Lucia Bose in CRONACA), as she goes through various shadings of her inner life. How does this affect the psychological balance of the film? Is it ever a subjective technique, or can we always distinguish between the female's crisis-state and the visual style of the director? If the psychological state changes, does the visual style remain essentially the same? (If possible, try to differentiate Antonioni's approach to the inner logic of style and feeling from Rossellini's portrayal of Ingrid Bergman in VOYAGE TO ITALY.)

3. By now the break with "neo-realism" as we have attempted to define it may seem complete. And yet there may be elements in the Antonioni films--social criticism, the director's attempt to set the camera up not as mediator or conveyor of attitudes but as recorder--which would allow us to see the films as conforming with the tenets of "neo-realism" (we may recall that Bazin so designates CRONACA DI UN AMORE, on p. 66). Trace these elements, and try to define the objectivity of Antonioni's camera in both films (or either one).

4. Antonioni often employs the physical shape of a body or an object to echo and crystallize the larger "themes" of his films. Can you cite specific examples of this from either film, and talk a bit about Antonioni's portrayal of life through the arrangement of acquisitions and objects (not necessarily excluding human shapes from those categories). What sorts of objects seem most on display, and how does this change from CRONACA to ECLIPSE.

Good writing; you are very specific while at the same time you cover larger stylistic questions which interest you.

jeremy butler

english 163

march 3, 1975

Assignment 2b, Neo-realism and Stylization in CRONACA DI UN AMORE

CRONACA DI UN AMORE emodies two ostensibly conflicting impulses in Italian cinema: on the one hand, stemming from perhaps as early as 1912 and QUO VADIS?, there is the drive to present artifice -- whether in the form of huge gladiator battle and ornate operas or the more intimate form of the caprices of a self-centered aristocrat -- and on the other hand, there is the desire to simply reveal truth (a.k.a. "neo-realism" and "the camera as recorder"), generally truth centered on socially oppressed indigents. (One could at this point, I presume, bring in the well-worn antimony of Lumiére versus Melies, reality versus artifice, but then it's best to reserve that for exegeses on French directors.) As divergent as these two impulses appear we have seen them merged again and again: De Sica's MIRACOLO A MILANO and Visconti's LA TERRA TREMA are particularly good examples, but one may find that one need only scratch the surface of most neo-realist works to discover the guiding hand of the artist shaping reality to fit his demands.

Lively introduction.

In specific, CRONACA DI UN AMORE fuses Antonioni's earlier documentary outlook with his infatuation with the inner state of his heroines (which will emerge in L'ECLISSE) to create a film aware of its neo-realist precursers at the same time it chooses largely to ignore them. In fact, CRONACA DI UN AMORE does not bear the slightest resemblance to neo-realism if one chooses to narrowly define it as a narrative gleaned from the daily papers, acted by persons similar in station to the characters, on the streets of Rome, the beaches of Aci Trezza or similar locales. By that

definition we would not only exclude CRONACA DI UN AMORE, but indeed a good portion of what has come to be understood as neo-realism. The boundaries of neo-realism are vague and pliable and one can therefore discern neo-realism in films lacking all or some of the above qualifications. One of the most tangible similarities between neo-realism and CRONACA DI UN AMORE is the social commentary inherent in a tale of two lovers, one rich and one poor. We notice their disparities: he is out of work and out of luck while she has married for money and now wants more. Noticing these disparities we tend to gravitate toward the lower-class, less avaricious individual. Additionally, Paolo is lustful, yet cold in her desires to eliminate her husband, she encourages a hesitating Guido to attempt murder and, while she exhorts him, she waxes warm and pleasant, but when pressure is applied (the arrival of the police at her home) she reverts to her earlier, self-centered state and declares that the police ought to have arrested Guido because he was the one that did it. Once she is calmed enough to learn the truth she attempts reconciliation with Guido, but he has tired of her and leaves for the station. Whether he will return or not is ambiguous.

The question remains, however, whether this is a society that is bad or just a woman gone wrong. Certainly there have been greedy women with unwanted husbands in films before CRONACA DI UN AMORE and yet they weren't classified social commentary (DOUBLE INDEMNITY jumps to mind). It seems to me, Paolo is a woman bent more by her own desires than by society. When Antonioni made L'ECLISSE twelve years later his commitment to social criticism had weakened even more. Take for example the wild scenes of trading on the floor of the stockmarket. There is a certain sense of the bestial in each of these sequences, but overall one is overwhelmed by the excitement of it all, not the ugliness that a camera employed by a more socially

critical director such as Bunuel might have created. Alain Delon portrays an attractive character that in point of fact enjoys interacting with the same sort of people that converse in dog barks in MIRACOLO IN MILANO. In any event, the social criticism present in CRONACA DI UN AMORE is not what leads Bazin to classify it neo-realist. He believes the film is neo-realist because:

> the director has not relied on an expressionism outside the characters; he builds all his effects on their way of life, their way of crying, of walking, of laughing. They are caught in the maze of the plot like laboratory rats being sent through a labyrinth. (p. 66)

I find it difficult to extract Bazin's precise meaning from the short section he devotes to CRONACA DI UN AMORE in What is Cinema? What would "expressionism outside of the characters" consist of? Is it expressionistic sets a la METROPOLIS or SIEGFRIED or THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI or expressive music composed by Max Steiner or Bernard Herrmann or even expressionistic make-up modelled on mime? I can agree with Bazin's evaluation of CRONACA DI UN AMORE to the extent that it contains a few neo-realistic facets, but his concept of "expressionism outside of the characters" eludes me.

Formally neo-realism and artifice are united into a style neither one nor the other, but let us try first to distill these two elements from the movie as a whole before investigating the synthesis of the two. The neo-realist impulse is best viewed during shots when the camera is concentrating on objects, as in the conclusion of L'ECLISSE. This preoccupation of Antonioni's with objects finds a more subtle expression in CRONACA DI UN AMORE in his emphasis on the texture of the world -- occasionally lessening the power of the content of his images. Consider in particular the shot of Paolo and Guido just after she has run to him from what she believes to be certain incarceration by the police. Guido pulls her up against a metallic wall

that gleams brightly behind the two of them while he talks some sense into her and our attention is drawn from narrative concerns to the world surrounding Paolo and Guido. The attention Antonioni pays to the objects surrounding his characters can be interpreted as attention paid to reality itself. The camera would be content to record the objects alone, but they are occasionally obfuscated by bothersome characters. Instead of the reality of people's lives echoed by the real settings (as in neo-realism proper), Antonioni films physical reality and peoples it with artificial characters entwined in artificial lives (the plot).

The second and in the final analysis predominating tendency in Antonioni's style is his proclivity toward stylization (presaged in Visconti's LA TERRA TREMA). Noel Burch (in Theory of Film Practice) describes it in this manner:

> ...in CRONACA DI UN AMORE the camera movement neither humbly follows the "natural" movements of theactors, as in academically transparent cinema, nor weaves the arbitrary and frenetic arabesques around the actors' movements characteristic of the films of a Max Ophuls or an Alexandre Astruc. Rather, the manner in which both the camera and the actors move is equally stylized, with each of these two sets of movements determining the possibilities of the other. (p. 77)

This "ballet" is best illustrated in shots such as the scene between Paolo and Guido on the bridge as they plan out the murder. The camera pans and tracks a full 360 degrees, framing one character and then the other and then the two together for a brief moment before one of the exits the frame, (though not in quite that order). The shot depicts visually the estrangement of the couple, but beyond that it illustrates ably what Burch was refering to. Throughout this shot the camera never resigns itself to mere recording, but instead enters into a complex interaction with the two characters, "each...of [their] movements determining the possibilities of the other." In

turn, the whole of the dance is "choreographed" by the director and thereby removed from any pretext of realism. Though Rossellini or De Sica probably control their films as much as Antonioni does, CRONACA DI UN AMORE has the appearance of a highly controlled situation, unlike PAISA or LADRI DI BICICLETTE, which are colored by a newsreel tint.

The uneasy union of neo-realism and strict stylization in CRONACA DI UN AMORE produces an almost tangible tension that electrifies the film. Apparently Antonioni would enjoy filming simple subjects such as sticks in barrels of water (L'ECLISSE) or a dark, but glistening, city street punctuated by streetlights (the final image in CRONACA DI UN AMORE), but he is torn from these "realistic" subjects to the utterly ephemeral and mercurial inner mechanisms of Paolo or, less centrally, Guido. In watching a film by Antonioni we feel each of these urges and are ourselves compelled to consider both aspects of the film, entreated forecefully by the masterful way Antonioni presents the subjects of each. For he makes a deserted street corner (L'ECLISSE) or a shining metallic wall (CRONACA DI UN AMORE) as fascinating as beautifully neurotic women (Monica Vitti, Lucia Bose), handsome men (Alain Delon) or gritty working class heroes (Massimo Girotti).

good conclusion.

English 163--The Italian Film
Semester II, 1974-75
Professor Silverman

Assignment 3a
SENSO (Luchino Visconti, 1954) and TALES OF POOR LOVERS (Carlo Lizzani, 1954)
due: 5:00 p.m., March 10th

1. What effect does narration have on the two films, besides placing the events in an "achieved" past? Does the narrative voice force us to view events in a more distanced manner, does it implicate itself in the story which unfolds, or do we neglect it on occasion without any great aesthetic (or informational) loss?

2. Bazin found a positive tension enacted in SENSO between theater and accurately realized events in the neo-realistic tradition. In fact, he makes the tension into an aesthetic principle by saying that SENSO "reveals the realism of theater . . . since Visconti forces, with a detail whose signal quality is naturally to make us forget it, and imposes on this luxurious decor--harmonious and quasi-pictorial--the rigor of documentary." Can you cite instances in the film of this tension; can you find moments which support Bazin's claims; do you think the film supports this tension and these claims as a whole?

3/ Compare the social microcosm of the Via del Corno in TALES OF POOR LOVERS with other communities in earlier films. Clearly this work is highly stylized, but it's possible that the stylization is of a different sort than that of TWO PENNYWORTH OF HOPE or MIRACLE IN MILAN. How does Lizzani achieve changes within the gentle stereotyping which may be noted at the beginning of the film (perhaps tracing the changes in one or two characters might lead to presentable generalizations about the nature of the "community" as a whole)?

4. Both films oppose private life to the world of events and politics--an opposition enacted extremely in SENSO between melodramatic romance and the movement of history, in TALES OF POOR LOVERS between the mild aspirations of small people and a cataclysmic event about to transform their lives. Do the films come out on one side, asopposed to the other (does Visconti champion passion at the expense of history, or, to put it less crudely, does he regret the necessary separation of the two and the necessary choice involved? is historical activity elevated above private event? does Lizzani deal with the opposition between individual aspiration and general welfare; what complications ensue from any such exploration by the director of TALES OF POOR LOVERS)?

English 163--The Italian Film
Michael Silverman and associates

Assignment ~~2~~ 3b
Write on one question only, or assemble a question in pastiche style.

1. Examine the pattern of masculine bonds and feminine exploitation in these two films; but don't get off into an ideological rap--try to discuss and analyze the relationship between the sexes in some way that will permit generalizations to emerge from the particular observation of individual sequences. A comparison with the tone of I VITELLONI might be in order here.

2. Pasolini says that he filmed ACCATTONE in a "reverential" style; that is, a style which involves the camera (and the audience) in a sacramental attitude toward things depicted. (In this respect, he mentions Dreyer and Mizoguchi as his models, and also invokes Masaccio's early Reniassance painting.) At the same time, his characters are involved in activity (pimping, petty thievery) which seem anything but "reverential" activities. Can you describe the tension which springs from this confrontation between style and content; is it successful as a means of furthering analysis, or does it involve the spectator in too many contradictions to be effective?

3. Pasolini remarks in an interview that, above all, he seeks to achieve intensity and passion. Does he succeed in ACCATTONE, a film which is shot in a very flat and sometimes deliberately (?) inexpressive style? Those who manage to see THE GOSPELK ACCORDING TO MATTHEW might look for Pasolini's particular of avoiding religious intensity, while opting for a kind of mythic expressive power.

4. Here is Pasolini's answer to a student at the Centro Sperimentale who accused him of being "not visual enough": "Look, my opinion is totally opposite to yours, there I really cannot answer you because to me ACCATTONE is frightfully visual. I throw clots of visual reality of such violence at the audience x that . . .I don't know: think for a moment of the scene of those people eating in the boat on the Tiber, think of Accattone naked, crossing himself, of Accattone diving, think, I don't know, just of the walls of Pigneto peeling in the sun . . . I try, in other words, to avoid all that is ornamental, all that is "trop plein," too lively; in a certain sense I am the opposite, I would like to to be the opposite of Fellini, who is instead extremely visual just in the sense you mean, perhaps; he is full of things, while I try to reduce my own exiguousness to just one object . . ." Comment on this analysis with examples from the film which substantiate or modify Pasolini's claims; and compare the visual style of ACCATTONE in these terms with Rossi's DEATH OF A FRIEND.

2

YOU DON'T SEEM TO HAVE FOUGHT YOUR WAY THROUGH P'S WORDS IN THAT INTERVIEW TOWARD AN INDIVIDUALIZED INTERPRETATION.

Jeremy Butler
English 163
March 18, 1975

Assignment 3b, ACCATONE

Judging from ACCATONE and THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW, Pier Paolo Pasolini delights in mixing together disparate elements of both content and style into an odd pastiche that one may consider facilely "ambivalent" (as does Pierre Leprohon) or an ingenious "means of furthering analysis." Setting aside judgements of value such as these, I think it important to consider precisely Pasolini's pastiche technique and the effects it may have on the viewer. Pasolini himself is the product of an odd union (his nobleman father and peasant mother) and, avoiding any hasty conclusions, it would seem that his film work reflects that confused begining.

his too conservative here —

or at least his crazy ancestry seems to be of more relevance in understanding his films than is the case with other filmmakers.

In assense, all filmmakers operate in a pastiche fashion; they must necessarily draw upon those that came before them. Everyone knows that D. W. Griffith did not invent the close-up, but that it was he that put it to the use that lead to its popularization. Working as he did just a scant decade or two after the invention of the medium, he still relied heavily upon those that came before. It is therefore no disgrace that Pasolini should state (Pasolini on Pasolini, p. 28):

> What counts [in his work] is the depth of feeling, the passion I put into things, it isn't so much the novelty of content, nor the novelty of form.

What Pasolini neglects to mention in this statement is the novelty of the combination of content and form present in works of his such as ACCATONE and THE GOSPEL. Granted, the content of ACCATONE stems directly from the narratives of Italian neo-realism and certain aspects of its (ACCATONE's) form (largely the use of Bach) have been incorporated into previous films to honor sacred subjects, but rarely have the two been combined. Instances of Bach accompaning

(BUT DOES THIS SEEM A NOVELTY WORTH BASING AN INTERPRETATION ON?

(BUT PASOLINI MEANS MORE THAN THIS — IT'S AN ATTEMPT TO BUILD A FILM FROM ORGANIC PROCEDURES OF SOUND AND IMAGE (A CINEMA VERITÉ). THE SIDE, WITH SCORES OF MUSIC, DOESN'T FIT, HOWEVER. COMPARE THIS

a gang of thugs punishing a whore for informing on a pimp friend of theirs (as in ACCATONE) remain few in number.

It has been assumed by many (Pasolini included) that the utilization of holy, classical music will expose the "epic religious grandeur of [the] miserable characters" (in Pasolini's words, Summer, '65, Film Quarterly) of Accatone's world, but it could just as easily be that the misery of the characters is highlighted by the contrast in style. Just as Stanley Kubrick emphasized the violent barbarism of Alex in CLOCKWORK ORANGE through the use of refined classical works (a facet totally absent from Anthony Burgess's original novel), Pasolini may be unwittingly stressing the ugly, "un-epic" side of Accatone's friends with the recurring motif of Bach's reverential works. There can be no guarantee that a pastiche composed of two such disparate elements will lead to the triumph of one over the other. It may be that they only contrast each other.

Up to this point I have considered solely the music Pasolini has chosen to accompany his visuals and I have come to the tentative conclusion that if Bach in ACCATONE is not an unsuccessful mess of contradictory implications, it is at least a problematical cohesion of conflicting form and content. Heretofore I have not considered other aspects of ACCATONE's mise-en-scene which may clarify the puzzling instance of Bach in the film. These ephemeral elements of the movie are delineated by Pasolini in the Film Quarterly article sited above; he speaks of projecting his love for Accatone, et. al., through "the rhythm of the story, through the way I move my characters, the atmosphere in which I immerse them, through the light, the sun, the environment around them." (p. 41) Discounting the ambivalent soundtrack, the above elements are invested with the responsibility to communicate the reverence Pasolini feels for his noble urban savages. It is here, if anywhere,

that he creates myths and epical heroes. He brings into play his sizable knowledge of painting to create an atmosphere surrounding Stella and her bottles (for example) that is an hommage to contemporary artist Morandi (according to Oswald Stack), thereby elevating drab, common Stella to the level of art. Though all the characters share in mythic aggrandizement of one form or another, Accatone is the focal point of Pasolini's creation of epic myth. Within him reside the final ambiguities of the movie. He is the only character aware of his mythic qualities: he rejects the name Vittorio because of its commonness. "There is just one Accatone!" he boasts. He performs acts of daring, diving into the Tiber River, to prove his immortality and extend his legend as much as collecting on a bet. In striving for immortality, attempting to attain the mythic, Accatone must battle his own inherent perishability. (Certainly a pimp is one of the most short-lived professions.) In his quest he obtains an epic religious aura, if one defines his religion as Pasolini describes his own: " a form of psychological aberration with a tendency towards mysticism" (Pasolini on Pasolini, p. 14).

Consider for example the mystic sense constructed from (to paraphrase Pasolini) the rhythm, the atmosphere, the light, the movement of Accatone in the sequence in which he threatens to jump from a bridge and, dissuaded from that, runs to the beach, washes his face and then coats it with sand. It is difficult to explicate exactly how Pasolini conjured that final, forceful image of Accatoni's sand covered face, but it is no less easy to shake the mystic (dare I say it?) reverberations that the picture instigates within the viewer. Pasolini's eminent respect and reverence for Accatone at that moment creates a character larger than life, a myth, an epic hero. Though a few minutes earlier we witnessed Accatone stealing a necklace

from the neck of his own son, we care little of his moral lapses and instead our mind is drawn to his brief moments of immortality. When Accatone dies and his fellow thief crosses himself in reverence we are reminded of the bare-chested Accatone crossing himself in preparation for his first dive into the Tiber. (Congruent with his iconoclastic mode of religion, he crosses himself incorrectly, touching his right shoulder first instead of his left.) Even in death his feats of bravado will be remembered and hearkened to, whether consciously or unconsciously.

By the end of the film, then, Accatone has acquired two levels of immortalization: 1) within the mind of the viewer and 2) within the minds of the other characters in ACCATONE (not to mention his actual existence on a strip of celluloid). ~~Accatone~~ He persues immortality in the second sense through his outrageous acts. These acts also affect the moviegoer, but he or she is additionally impressed by the images these acts produce. It is here that we discover the real tension of ACCATONE lies, the combat between immortality and perishability. By reverently playing his fragile characters with the eternal life that is art Pasolini proves his love and respect for them. The classical music (which I still consider ambivalent) is but a small factor in this process of creating unique, fascinating (mythic?) characters such as Accatone. Not sure if this sums up the film, but you've written a very nice interpretation of at least a few of its facets.

English 163--The Italian Film
Mr. Silverman
Assignment 4a

1. Each of the films has a central character who seems fated, and who accepts the operations of the world with some passivity. Comment on the social mechanisms in each film which help induce this attitude.

2. Now that you've seen films like MIRACLE IN MILAN, SENSO and LA TERRA TREMA you can begin to appreciate the extent to which some Italian directors employ spectacle as a means of social analysis. Do you think that Francesco Rosi achieves this level of analysis in MOMENT OF TRUTH? That is, does the director employ spectacle as a means of criticizing the world depicted in the film? You'll probably have to begin with a definition of spectacle.

3. While Olmi's camera notes events and people with some care in IL POSTO, Rosi relies heavily on the 'scope camera's breadth of field and uses an extraordinarily fast cutting style (especially in the bullfight sequences themselves) to facilitate a sense of onrushing action. Can you characterize the differences in style of observation, and the aggressiveness/unobtrusiveness of the two cameras?

4. Which film is a documentary and which is fiction? Or are there styles of fiction and levels of notation mixed together in each film? If the latter, why are the two films so different? Does the simple difference in subject matter account for all the differences?

English 163--The Italian Film
Semester II, 1974-75
Mr. Silverman

Assignment 4b

1. Several critics have tried to classify parts of the film according to what seem to them a series of various modes of existence (fantasy, memory, present-tense action, dream). Does the film tend to arrange itself in this way; if you think it does try to discuss the visual properties of each mode. How do the dreams (perhaps the one involving the father and death, or the opening sequence of the film) differ from the fantasies (the harem sequences)? What thematic properties tend to attach themselves to the various modes?

2. It is a matter of course that everyone has seen a Fellini film. How does 8½ compare with previous Fellini films you have seen (even if you've only seen I VITELLONI)? Especially--how do we place such an obviously solipsistic exercise in the career of a director who has acquired such responsive audiences, and who claims that films should be like circuses (i.e., open and available to everyone)? (NB. Try to avoid mystical answers like "Love," or "Sheer Visual Beauty.") How is ~~that~~ it that Fellini manages to make a private film and a very public one at the same time? Or doesn't he manage? (One might try to evoke the devices by which he makes the public private, and vice versa.)

3. The ending of the film was very troublesome for Fellini (he changed it completely several times). Does it seem to you a "solution" to the problems which the text as a whole has posed for over two hours; is it meant to be a "solution," in your opinion? At any rate, what sorts of new problems does it raise? Again, those of you who have seen some of the later work (especially THE CLOWNS, FELLINI ROMA and AMARCORD) might wish to speculate on the implication for these works of the last scene in 8½.

4. "So much for 8½ I thought, and yet the several incoherent (I thought) bits and pieces of it managed to remain in my mind with surprising intensity, and with a persistence which finally drew me back to see the film again. What happened upon my return is something which has happened very rarely in my experience of movie-going, for I am now not at all convinced that 8½ is not a masterpiece. Where were those things going in different directions, those moments of flagging interest? I could not find them. It is not primarily the content of 8½ that is illuminated upon seeing it for the second time for, in fact, this possesses, from the first, an exceptional, pellucid clarity; the revelation of my twice seeing 8½ was rather of its form, structure and unity. The pieces fit together beautifully, and they cohere; the fabric is whole. I gather that 8½ has been linked by the reviewers to the "difficult" or "experimental" cinema of such as Resnais, but the comparison is a palpably false one. What strikes one as most unusual (but not difficult) in first seeing the film is the way in which what constitutes in it a representation of "reality" is mixed with memories hallucinations, dreams, and fantasies; all these things mixed up in turn with the film within a film, not for the purposes of paradox and enigma, but to the end of a direct expression of the way in which the "fiction" and the "reality", art and life, interpenetrate, and draw for their sustenance upon one another. But, unlike LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD, it is not that on eis unable to distinguish the one level from the other; only that the precise point at which one leads into the other is often not quite to be grasped. Yet, rather than confusing or stalemating our response, this blurring of boundaries has the effect of heightening our awareness of both the rational content of dream and fantasy and the fantastic element in what we call reality" (William S. Pechter, Twenty-Four Times a Second). Comment on Pechter's response, use it as a key to bring out your own response to the film, and support or quarrel with the part of his statement I've underlined.

jeremy butler

english 163

april 7, 1975

Assignment 4b, question #1

Valiant attempt to put some rational order into the arrangement of things. Rather careful writing style, as usual. Don't know if I go along with all that you say!

There is no simple differentiation of the "various modes of existence" in Fellini's 8½. In particular, there seems to be no real distinction (at least upon only two viewings) in camera style between, for example, Guido obtaining his mineral water at the spa and Guido whipping the women in the harem sequence. By this I mean Fellini does not regularly use techniques that have come to signal dream or fantasy sequences, e.g., slow motion, very soft focus or distorted sound (though a few of Fellini's fantasy scenes are silent, this is not uniformly the case). Further, he doesn't enter his fantasies with anything other than a straight cut. The film begins in a dream and ends in a fantasy; throughout the film we leap or slide into Guido's memories, fantasies or dreams and though we remain conscious of a certain reality (i.e., a director, Guido, trying to make a science fiction (?) film) we can never be sure that that reality isn't just another level of Guido's mind. Starting and finishing in a level of consciousness other than the "present-tense action" Fellini throws doubt upon the reality of the images inbetween. 8½ could just be an extended dream sequence of Guido's in some larger movie Fellini has yet to construct.

Fair enough.

Excepting the hazy borders between the fantastic and the present-tense fantasy that is fictional film, it is still possible to reach some conclusions about the four texts in the film (as they are enumerated in question #1: "fantasy, memory, present-tense action and dream"). These four texts divide themselves into two categories: the real and the imaginary. In the former we find events that are currently happening and those which have already happened, that is, "present-tense action" and "memory", respectively.

Within the frame of the movie these are "real" events. In my second category I place "fantasy" and "dream".

In the"real"category one of the major concerns is control. In both his memory and his present situation he is controlled by forces outside of his influence. His peers provoke him to dance with the whore in the one instance and his mother carries and dries him and then his sister practically commands him to chant the magic words in the other. In his present situation he is not so easily controlled by persons surrounding him (in the course of his life he has learned some techniques of power), but he cannot master his personal problems as handily as he later fantastically masters the women of his harem. He is caught up in a web of wives, mistresses, starlets, producers and his own confusion. We sense the guiding hand of fate (God? Fellini?) directing (no pun intended) his actions.

This lack of control also evidences itself in his dreams (though not in his fantasies). In the initial dream (which begins the film), Guido is first trapped within a car filling with fumes and, upon escaping, is tied (as a kite might be) to his producer on the beach below him. In this respect his dreams are a very tangible manifestation of his waking world and reflect his battles for control over his life. However, overall, their connection with his reality is elusive, beyond the knowledge of even Guido. Despite the somewhat problematical nature of these dreams, they must be considered to be his creation and therefore under his subliminal control. One of the chief differences between the imaginary and the real is that the imaginary is a product of Guido's mind. We are not thereby afforded a simple contrast between the real world and the world that Guido would like it to be, Fellini's co-ordination of the two worlds is too complex and at times indistinct to allow that, but rather a series of delicate counterpoints are constructed playing

the real against the imaginery, the controlled against the uncontrolled, the creation by the self against that which is imposed upon the self.

The real and the imaginary intersect most fiercely in the sequence in which Guido screens the tests he has filmed earlier. Superficially the scene belongs to the strictures of reality; here we find the everyday occurence of a film director viewing screentests. Even if we ignore the one short fantasy Guido has of executing his scriptwriter, unreal elements abound. As with the dreams and fantasies, the imaginary aspects here are the product of Guido's mind; the screentests he has ostensibly produced in his capacity of film director bear impossible resemblances to his realities. The actresses portray characters derived from his life as well as the originals. How are we to deal with a Saraghina who not only resembles the real Saragina, but wears clothes identical to her counterpart in reality? Guido is also confused: "Can't you see I can't choose [one actress over another]?",he says to noone in particular. Finally he seeks salvation in his star actress who shows up at the end of the sequence. At this point in time, Guido withdraws from his confusing, disorienting creations.

Later, Guido comes to believe that both imaginary and real worlds are manifestations of his subjectivity and indeed, the denouement supports this concept. Up until then only his imagination has been his doing, a reflection of himself, but in that last sequence he incorporates imagination and reality with his statement, "All the confusion of my life has been a reflection of myself." Which is tantamount to declaring that all the confusion in his life has been his creation. His inability to choose between his mistress and his wife has become his inability to choose between actresses auditioning for a role in his fantasy. Further, the producer's displeasure over Guido's indecisiveness has become the dream of the producer's displeasure over

Guido's flight above the beach. Guido himself has become an imaginary image of himself as a child, not wholly imagination and not wholly reality. The real elements of 8½, which we have seen to be outside of his control, have become the imaginary elements that he creates and influences. He has become the director of his own life.

There are still problems in this development - but it sounds like a neat solution.

English 163, The Italian Film
Semester II, 1974-75
Michael Silverman

Optional paper: Bertolucci

1. Perhaps more than any other films seen this semester, tonight's films strive for a fusion of the emotional and the intellectual. What are some of the problems involved in this effort, on the evidence of the two films? Describe some of the themes and devices which might account for the extraordinary emotional power achieved (you might cite the music, camera movement, themes) and try to explain the ways in which these expressive devices connect with the thought of the work. It's not necessary to discuss both works in toto; nor is it really necessary to generalize, or to make comparisons with other directors (though some of the sequences and shots directly invite this). Rather, you should try to analyze the impact (thematic and visual both) of one or two sequences from either film (or both). If some generalizations flow from your analysis, fine.

2. The last 30 minutes of BEFORE THE REVOLUTION contain at least three major sequences (the elegy for the river, the opening of the opera, the CP picnic) which don't have necessarily logical connections. They present radical and conservative views, public and private consciousness. Does this mixture reflect on the central problem of the young man? (Do not give a "character analysis" of Fabrizio; concentrate on the way in which Bertolucci has structured the problem.) In other words, how does the structure of the film, its themes and techniques, mirror the preoccupations of this central character?

3. Clearly, THE SPIDER'S STRATAGEM, like BEFORE THE REVOLUTION, deals with political myth. How does this myth get decoded by Athos Magnani, what attractions does it have for him (physical and psychological), and how does his dilemma seem comparable to that of paralysis induced by the opposition of the operatic/theatrical and the political which has been noted in the work of other directors (Visconti in particular). What are the constituent parts, in other words, of the spider's web; and who/what is the spider?

English 163, Italian Film
Semester II, 1974-75
Michael Silverman

Assignment 5a

1. Does plot get in the way of politics in BATTLE OF ALGIERS? That is, do traditional aesthetic elements (plot, characterization) get in between our political responses and the events depicted? You might comment on such elements as music, setting, etc.

2. To the extent that you can with this particular print, try to give some sense of the visual quality of BATTLE OF ALGIERS. How does Pontecorvo draw on newsreel techniques without losing control of his fiction. Comment especially on the use of long- and medium-long shots as a means of establishing the collective nature of space.

3. Now that you've seen at least 3 films by Visconti, can you make any assessment of his strengths and weaknesses as a film-maker. Draw on OSSESSIONE for your primary examples, and try to establish some continuity of theme and technique between it and SENSO and LA TERRA TREMA.

4. Discuss Visconti's use of the long take and depth of focus, concentrating on specific shots and sequences.

English 163--The Italian Film
Semester II, 1974-75
Mr. Silverman

Assignment 5b

1. Each film might be seen as an assault on the bourgeois (or proto-bourgeois) family, but the assaultsare launched from different perspectives (Pasolini takes the mythic route, Bellocchio prefers behavioral satire). And one film suggests a broadening and strengthening of the familial structure while the other completely fragments it. Can you account for these differences with respect to the varying treatment of the basic material? In other words, how does Bellocchio's mordant social analysis inevitably moves his characters toward uneasy alliance within the same house (structure); and how does Pasolini's mystico-mythic energy propel his film toward the father's final naked isolation? You might want to compare the families of LA TERRA TREMA and these films.

2. Aside from the family itself, what institutions are satirized in Bellocchio's film? Does satire involve a criticism of tactics, humiliation of the characters, a general indictment of the society as a whole? And how does Bellocchio nevertheless manage to make even the most asinine moments which the characters bring on themselves somehow capable of capturing our understanding, if not our affection?

3. Pasolini's film seems very schematic, as the title implies, and this would appear to be part of his intent, as if he were subjecting his characters to the rigor of a mathematical equation. Does the thing work as a film? that is, how does Pasolini avoid the kind of dryness and stiffness which usually accompanies "thesis films"? Which sequences seem to you to be the most successful cinematically, and why? Try to account for some of the following in terms of the film's total effect (thematic and formal): silence, intercut shots of landscape, cutting (especially between sequences), the slow pace of the film, use of color.

Valiant job!
Interesting try at a b+w/color analysis-
not sure the film can really be explained by
any one mechanical
formula (which, I guess,
is to its credit.)

2+

jeremy butler
english 163
may 2, 1975

Assignment 5b, Pasolini's TEOREMA

Refreshing opening sentence!

In TEOREMA, Pasolini brings a schema to bear upon a subject Preston Sturges has termed "topic A", sexuality. With the "rigor of a mathematical equation" he presents us with the effects of the visit of a stranger (x) upon each member of a bourgeois household (A, B, C, D, and E): Post-visit household = x(A) + x(B) + x(C) + x(D) + x(E). The films topic and various idiosyncrasies of Pasolini's style rescue it from eventual presentation to a high school algebra class, but it is definately bereft of the warm humor of some earlier movies dealing with the sexual foibles of upper-class society (e.g., Renoir's REGLE DU JEU or even Bellocchio's CHINA IS NEAR).

But it has humor of some sort-?

To analyse TEOREMA's formal and narrative structure we must first take firm grasp of it's narrative schema and in so doing develop an initially superficial consideration of the formal elements to be elaborated upon later.

The film begins with a color, pre-credit sequence in which workers are interviewed by a newsman concerning the recent turn-over of an industrial plant to just those workers. After the credits we soon dive into a series of black and white (actually sepia, apparently black and white film printed on color stock?) episodes accompanied by music and muted synchronized sound. These introductory vignettes deal with the father, the son, the daughter, the mother and the maid -- our five protagonists. Each character is treated with equal emphasis and is developed not so much as parts of a familial whole, but rather as separate entities. It is not until they sit down to eat that the family is joined together (soon to be rent asunder) and it is then that the announcement of the Visitor's coming arrival heralds the advent of a cocktail party, as well as color and synchronized sound. From there each

character has sex with the Visitor, often interrupted by shots of a barren, volcanic ash wasteland, and then the Visitor leaves as abruptly as he arrived -- thereby bringing each member of the family to critical sexual mass: the maid becomes a saint, the son turns to art, the daughter reverts to catatonia, the mother investigates nymphomania and the father, well, the father is transported by an act of exhibitionism to the volcanic wasteland we had glimpsed earlier.

One of the most striking formal devices Pasolini uses to construct this structure is color, or the lack thereof, and it's coordination with the wasteland. Sternberg's chiaroscuro or glistening film noir treats such as Dassin's NIGHT AND THE CITY aside, black and white is generally less exciting and/or fertile than color. By switching to color upon the arrival of the Visitor, Pasolini encourages a vision of this family's world being enriched by the Visitor's presence. Even so, our wonder at the appearance of color at this point is not the same as Dorothy's wonder as she first views Munchkenland in Fleming's WIZARD OF OZ. Conditioned by the pre-credit sequence, we had expected TEOREMA to be in color and we question the initial black and white material as odd rather than viewing the inception of color as peculiar. In essence, however, to quibble over the oddity of the color versus the black and white is senseless; the mere change from one medium to another forces the movie-goer to consider why that alternation was enacted. In TEOREMA we may assume that the Visitor brings a certain fertility to the film.

One might ask, however, if color is therefore associated with this one character, why do we not return to black and white once the character has exited? Surely Pasolini doesn't use color as gratuitously as Robert Nelson in EL BLONDINO (a New American Cinema piece which switches from color to black and white congruent with the type of film Nelson could come up with

from day to day during shooting). Even though the Visitor is basically a passive recipient upon which each member of the household places his or her sexual demands and as such commands no positive forces, he has catalyzed certain processes within each character which continue during and are further excellerated by his absence. With the exception of the maid and the son, these processes return each of the persons to the frigidity of our first black and white encounter with them. The father has the misfortune of most graphically representing his sexual impotency (the final image of the movie), but the mother and daughter are entrapped in their own form of the same frustration. In her catatonic state the daughter resembles the black and white still photos she harboured, thus returning to the sterility of her pre-Visitor existence. Additionally, her photograph album has been associated with her two sexual encounters within the scope of the film. During the black and white sequence her boyfriend snatches it from her and later attempts to snatch a kiss in similar fashion. Secondly, she freely shows the Visitor her album just before she freely gives herself to him. Her mother is reduced to seeking sex from strangers on the street. A search which leads her to negative, imprisoning images such as the shots from her point of view after she leaves the room of her first street lover, that is, the predominently black shots which contain little, if any, color. Just as the daughter achieves black and white through her rigidity and the father through his exhibitionism, the mother is also confronted by "black and whiteness" in her life.

Though the mother and father each desire to further their interaction with society, or at least, further their sexual interaction, both the maid and the son are driven outside society proper by their contact with the Visitor. Further, their creative impulse has been loosed; the maid cries

tears of "rejuvenation" and heals sickly youngsters and the son strives to create a work of art totally separate from anything that has come before, something stridently new. Compared to the others, their contact with black and white and/or the volcanic wasteland is minimal and, not incidently, they seem to be the most positively affected of the group.

The second most evident formal device would have to be the long patches of silence or near silence on the soundtrack. It appears to me that Pasolini utilizes silence in some instances as the soundtrack's equivalent to black and white. Though, as with any film, there are gaps of silence throughout the movie, the main image I associate with the silence is the wasteland. The mere barrenness of that setting suggests quiet. To carry that one step further, and to confirm an assumption I have been pursuing throughout this paper, I conclude that the wasteland suggests the apotheosis of bourgeois (and in Pasolini's view, twisted) sexuality and that black and white is its formal correlative. In accord with my teorema of the close connection between the wasteland and the black and white sequences, the latter are presented with a muted, only partially synchronized sound. A musical accompaniment underlies those sequences, but it is underplayed to say the least. In various parts of the film, silence is associated with sex: in particular, most of the Visitor's sexual activities are near silent, the sexual frustration of the daughter is embodied in her total silence, the father disrobes wordlessly and the mother picks men up without a sound. Once again it is the son and, to a lesser degree, the maid who are separated from the group by a formal technique. The son, who I cited previously as a positive force, constantly talks to himself or is accompanied by a voiceover narration of his thoughts. The maid is less talkative and consequently fits into my interpretation roughly. She is

silent during much of the film, but in the final image of her (that of her being buried) she is quite talkative. I submit that it is this parting look at her that is most indicative.

I have written of the sterility and impotency of the black and white image in comparison to one of color; a similar case could correspondingly be made for silence and sound, but in the case of TEOREMA the silence has an effect closer to the silent dream sequence of Bunuel's LOS OLVIDADOS than the black and white footage in TEOREMA. Which is to say the silence (or lack of synchronized sound) in TEOREMA contributes to an over all uneasy feeling generated by the black and white sequences and the later sexual scenes. Something is missing which ought to be present in these scenes -- the silence emphasizes the vacuity of the character's lives. In particular, the absence of sound is indicative of the absence of genuine affection in the sex life of this Italian, upper-class family.

Silence also harkens back to the strong, right melodrama of Mayan and his contemporaries it has other connotations, besides this obvious one.

No member of the family is sincerely interested in any other member -- a lack of concern that is conveyed most forcefully by Pasolini's parallel editing. TEOREMA begins with each protagonist in a parallel situation, but instead of uniting them as Griffith unites Zita Johnson and Hal Skelly in THE STRUGGLE Pasolini brings them together only very briefly before they diverge again and forever. Only during the meal immediately before the Visitor arrives and at the cocktail party immediately following his arrival do we really see the family together as a whole. In contrast, the family of LA TERRA TREMA is visually united with both themselves and the generations that came before (through still pictures hung on the walls). Even the groups in two films similarly preoccupied with the destruction of the family, Bellocchio's CHINA IS NEAR and FISTS IN HIS POCKET, cohere more than in TEOREMA.

Formally, then, TEOREMA enacts a criticism of bourgeois sexuality as fierce as the narrative elements. The family is kept separate throught the editing, they are cast in a strange light by both the initial black and white sequences and the latent black and white throughout the film and they stand charged with eerie emptiness by the long spaces of silence. In the final analysis, the intensity of this indictment saves the film from the "dryness and stiffness" of socalled "thesis films" (though I still remain unclear as to precisely what that term refers to). Just a step removed from savagery, Pasolini attacks his prey in a fashion quite unbecoming a social scientist.

I THINK THAT MOVEMENT FROM COLOR TO B+W CAN HAVE AN INFINITE NUMBER OF POSSIBLE EFFECTS — LOOK AT THE RANGE BETWEEN THE WIZARD OF OZ + NIGHT + FOG, FOR EXAMPLE. JUSTIFICATION WOULD SEEMINGLY NEED TO TAKE PLACE WITHIN THE THEMATIC PROCESSES OF THE FILM. I THINK YOU'VE DONE AN EXCELLENT JOB — BUT OCCASIONALLY THE ANALOGIES BECOME SOMEWHAT STRAINED.